N.O. Drugs Said Non-Mafia

Times-Picayune

U.S. Agency Moves Into New Quarters Here

By PAUL ATKINSON

The chief narcotics officer of a new five-state region that includes New Orleans and Louisiana said here Thursday that it is his belief "there has not been any Mafia type distribution of narcotics in this area in the past 10 years."

Jerry N. Jenson, regional director of the office that has been established to serve Louisiana, Mississippi, Arkansas, Alabama and Tennessee, asserted, "the people who peddle narcotics in New Orleans aren't controlled by the Mob."

Jenson likened the local peddlers to "independent business operators—they will go to any source."

As Jenson talked, workmen bustled around the fourth floor offices of the Bureau of Narcotics and Dangerous Drugs, tidying up the new quarters at 546 Carondelet St. Jenson said the bureau moved into the offices Monday.

"We have expanded our staff in New Orleans from eight people in April, 1968, to one of 37 at present," explained Jenson. "So our previous office space in the old Federal Building was inadequate. The office now contains 8,000 square feet of floor space and 21 rooms."

BULK OF ADDICTS

Jenson said he has found the bulk of the drug addicts in the five-state region are in New Orleans, and this is one reason the newly-formed regional office was placed her. He said Memphis, Tenn., likely would rank second in number of addicts.

"Our figures show there are 1,500 addicts in New Orleans," said Jenson. "But I think that figure is conservative. It may be double that number."

His regional office works closely with the New Orleans Police Department and the Jefferson Parish Sheriff's Department, explained Jenson. "Neither one of us has the manpower to do what we need to do," he said."But working together, it is much better."

Turning in his chair, Jenson pointed to a radio telephone which he said hooks him into the narcotics offices of Jefferson and Orleans parishes. "It's like one big office," he said.

In the days ahead, Jenson said his agency intends to emphasize education and research in the field of dangerous drugs.

"Right now, the bureau is conducting 126 studies on the effects of LSD," said Jenson. "We want to be able to tell people—particularly younger people—just what damage LSD does to humans."

RECENT SEIZURE

Showing how closely his federal bureau and parish authorities work, Jenson told of the recent seizure of a shipment of a cough syrup bound for New Orleans from Baton Rouge. "It contained a small amount of opium and a person could get a buzz on," said Jenson. "We worked with Jefferson authorities and took the shipment. The bottles were going to be sold for $5 apiece, though costing only $1."

In response to a question about why the increased emphasis on drug addiction, Jenson replied, "Because there is so much of it. From 1960 to 1967, drug violations rose 165 per cent. Arrests of persons under the age of 18 increased 778 per cent during that time. Our arrests rose 60 per cent from 1966 to 1967."

Jenson said narcotics agents are being hired in increasing numbers. "We have risen from 600 agents to 900 and have authorization for another 40 more by September," said Jenson.

"The police superintendent of New York City, for instance rates drugs his No. 1 law enforcement problem. And it's the same in Washington, D.C."

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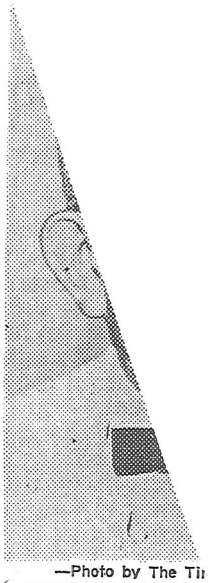

—Photo by The Ti

WILLIAM M'CAN

was installed as pre. the Rotary Club of N leans Wednesday night Southern Yacht Club. officers seated included. Sterling Dunn, vice-presid George Morris, secretar Louis Gaudet, treasurer, an J. Everett Eaves Jr., registrar.